

South Danvers May 3rd 1837.

Elijah W. Upton, Esq.

Dear Sir

It has been my intention for some weeks past, to address you on the subject of the effort we are making for the increase of our Beneficiary Fund at Andover. I take the liberty to do so, knowing very well the multitude of applications which a man in your position must encounter, for contributions to one object & another, and yet I am encouraged to ask your attention to this object among others, by the liberality with you have once before received it, in an humbler form than that which we are compelled to give to it now.

I will state the case to you, as briefly as I can, in a letter. The general object you will remember, I stated in a meeting

of a few gentlemen here last year. We have now arrived at a point at which we feel obliged to press the effort for an increase of our Beneficiary Fund by an amount of \$40,000 dollars. The circumstances which have driven us to this conclusion are these - The change which has taken place in the expenses of living, within the last five years, has compelled a much larger proportion of our students than formerly, to seek the aid of our Fund. The number has increased from about forty five to about sixty five, in the course of the last three years. At the same time, the amount of the appropriation to each man, which has never exceeded forty dollars a year, is now inadequate to accomplish what it did accomplish ten or twenty years ago - the price of board in Andover, having doubled in that time. Our fund having remained the same, the consequence

is that we are not only unable to make the needed increase of appropriation, but, with our present means, we must diminish it on account of the increased number of applicants. This would be disastrous to us. Many of our students would be compelled to leave us - and our Seminary would inevitably fall into the scale of second or third rate Institution. We feel that we owe it to our Churches, & to Massachusetts, & to all the Educational Institutions of New England to prevent this, if we can. There are but two modes of doing it - one is to rely on annual contributions from the Churches, - the other, to obtain the permanent increase of our Fund, as above proposed. The first of these plans would compel us to keep an agent in the field, and would soon become burdensome to our friends, who are already pressed by as many regular objects of charity as they feel able to meet.

we have determined therefore, upon the second mode, and we mean to do it without employing any other agency than that of the Faculty and Trustees of the Seminary. We think the most feasible way of accomplishing our object, is to establish scholarships of a thousand dollars each, the income of which shall be appropriated to one student. We hope to find some single individuals who will be able to found a scholarship. We hope to find others who by uniting their contributions - say two or three persons - will found a scholarship. We think that others still, will be able to contribute a scholarship, in two, three, or more annual instalments. Again, we anticipate that many churches can found each a scholarship. And where nothing of this kind can be done, contributions may be reasonably hoped for, in larger or smaller amounts. In this way, we think our object can

be gained, without interfering with other objects, and without being really burdensome to individuals or to churches, and once done, it puts the Seminary on a basis which will make it relatively equal in point of means, to what it was forty years ago.

To put you in possession of all our policy, I ought to say that this Beneficent effort is part of a system for the general reinforcement of our Seminary. Gentlemen in Boston are engaged in a similar effort for the re-endowment of our professorships - and if these two objects can be secured in New England, our friends in Brooklyn say that they will be responsible for the building of a fireproof library, to contain our twenty thousand volumes which are now insecure. The whole sum which we expect to raise is a hundred thousand dollars. A Committee of business-men in Boston, have examined for themselves, our books, our investments, the history of our donations, & our whole

pecuniary foundation and have satisfied themselves of the reality of our necessities, and have so reported, in a very elaborate recommendation of our plans to the churches there.

For the raising of this Beneficiary Fund, we are limited, for reasons which I could explain to you in person, to the States of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, exclusive of Boston, & its immediate vicinity - and of the churches in Massachusetts, many are too feeble to do much for our object. My own opinion is, that our main reliance must be on wealthy individuals here & there, and on the churches of comparatively few of the cities & large towns. We should be glad to receive, however, any suggestions or information on this point, from persons who may interest themselves enough in the matter, to form an intelligent opinion of what is, & what is not, practicable in the case.

These are the main facts in our system of operations. Of the wisdom of our policy, you

can form an ^{opinion} ~~impression~~, and as to the importance of our object, I do not feel that you need any suggestion from me. I am sure that it is one which will commend itself to your judgment, and you will specially appreciate the importance of not suffering our New England Institutions to retrograde in their influence, by remaining stationary while the rest of the country sweeps by them.

I have looked with a good strong Yankee pride on your "Prabody Institute," and I feel a little taller at the thought that old Danvers has produced a man who, though immersed in business, is able to appreciate the value of a literary establishment like that. It is such things as these that are to preserve the influence of New England in forming American character; long after her political influence has of necessity become secondary and provincial.

I shall esteem it a personal favour, if you will look at this matter with as

much deliberation as you may think
it deserves - and, unless you see objections
to such a course which are unknown to me,
will you have the goodness to ask your
father to think of it? If either or
both of you feel able to contribute to this
effort, you will, by doing so, add to the
obligations I already sustain to you in
behalf of Andover, & in my own behalf for
the personal kindness I have received.

Very truly yours
Austin Phelps.

Very important
letter to father